

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for performing a coupling reaction between acetaldehyde and a terminal alkyne to yield a hydroxyalkyne comprising the steps of;
 - (i) reacting without solvent, a terminal alkyne with zinc triflate in the presence of (+)- or (-)-N-methylephedrine and a cyclic amine base selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of 1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene (DBU), 1,5-diazabicyclo-[4.3.0]non-5-ene and 1,4-diazabicyclo[2.2.2]octane, to form a metal-alkyne complex, and
 - (ii) adding a solution of acetaldehyde in a solvent selected from the group consisting of a hydrocarbon, an aromatic hydrocarbon, an ether, an alcohol ~~or~~ and a chlorinated hydrocarbon to the metal alkyne complex.
2. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the terminal alkyne is of general formula $R^1R^2C(OH)C\equiv CH$ in which R^1 and R^2 may be the same or different and are selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of methyl, ethyl and propyl.
3. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, ~~or claim 2~~ wherein the acetaldehyde concentration is between 0.1 and 2 moles/litre.
4. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein step (ii) is performed at -20 to 25°C over a period of 3 to 10 hours.
5. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of zinc triflate : acetaldehyde is 1.5:1, the molar ratio of cyclic amine base : acetaldehyde is 1.6:1 and the molar ratio of (+)- or (-)-N-methylephedrine to acetaldehyde is 1.6:1.